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ABSTRACT

Predicting that Italian Canadians would hold attitudes of greater hostility and anxiety toward authority than Slavic Canadians, this study, using 58 part-time summer students (29 Italians and 29 Slavs) at three universities in Canada, analyzed the subjects' responses to the five-response option Likert type scale. Results confirmed the early predictions. When compared to the attitudinal positions of French and English Canadians on the same scale, the results revealed that Italian Canadians shared with the French Canadian majority in Quebec a high level of hostility toward authority, while the Slavic Canadians shared with English Canadians, the majority Canadian language group, a low level of hostility toward authority. It was also noted that Italian Canadians shared with English Canadians high scores on attitudes of anxiety toward authroity. (HOD)

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SLAVIC AND ITALIAN CANADIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS AUTHORITY

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Recent research projects note differences between language groups both in respect to social behavior (Carlisle, 1968; Malo, 1968) and social attitudes (Auclair and Read, 1969; Ryan, 1970, 1971). Each of these studies has focused on the French and the English, Canada's two dominant language groups and this concentration reflects the scarcity of research on the other linguistic minorities. This report helps to fill in this research vacuum as it compares the social attitudes of Slavic and Italian Canadians.

The following review of the literature offers relevant conceptual and operational definitions, develops a theoretical rationale for differences in language group attitudes, and concludes with two specific directional hypotheses. The definition section offers definitions of attitudes and language; the rationale section argues for attitudinal differences between language groups on functional, emotional, and cognitive bases; and the prediction section reviews some relevant Canadian literature in order to make specific hypotheses. The methodology, results, and discussion sections follow the predictions.

Attitudes

"An attitude is an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to the individual's world" (Kretch and Crutchfield, 1948, p. 152). Operationally, researchers have defined attitudes as responses to an interviewer's questions, responses to paper and pencil tests, and readings on GSR

machines. This paper defines attitudes as responses to a Likert type scale.

Several social and demographic variables influence attitudes; ethnic identification (Harding, Proshansky, Kutner, and Chein, 1968), social class (Cavan, 1964), religion (Gleck and Stark, 1965), and language (Auclair and Read, 1969). Focusing on language as antecedent to attitudes, Raymond Crist (1968) argues that language builds certain attitudes into people both in terms of the cultural implications of the origin of one's native tongue and in terms of the language patterns reflected in their conceptual structure. Crist's view of language relates to John Carroll's (1953) definition of language.

Language

John Carroll (1953, p. 10) defines language as:

> a structural system of arbitrary vocal sounds and sequences of sounds which is used, or can be used in interpersonal communication by an aggregation of human beings, and which rather exhaustively catalogues the things, events, and processes in the human environment.

This definition implies the social, emotional, and cognitive nature of language. That language can be used in interpersonal communication by an aggregation of human beings reflects its social nature and implies an emotional dimension. That language catalogues the things, events, and processes in the human environment reflects its cognitive nature. It follows that language group members should hold attitudes which aid their functional, emotional, and cognitive integration into the language community. In other words, the attitudes of Slavic Canadians should aid their functional, emotional, and cognitive integration into the Slavic Canadian community as the attitudes of Italian Canadians should aid their functional, emotional, and cognitive integration into

the Italian Canadian community. The following pages develop this line of thought prior to focusing on the two specific language groups and making predictions.

Language and Attitudes

Both language and attitudes serve instrumental and integrative functions and it can be argued that the functions served by the Slavic person's attitudes and language might differ from the functions served by the Italian person's attitudes and language. Katz (1960) argues that attitudes can serve utilitarian (instrumental) functions and Smith, Bruner, and White (1956) posit the social adaptation (integrative) function of attitudes. In like fashion, Lambert (1967) points out the fact that language can serve the instrumental goal of getting ahead in one's occupation as well as the integrative goal of gaining acceptance in one's language community. Consequently, the social attitudes of the Slavic person should differ from the social attitudes of the Italian person as their respective attitudes serve to integrate them into differing social, familial, occupational, and in some cases, religious patterns.

The same conclusion follows from the emotional correlation of language and attitudes. Hughes (1971) points to the relationship of language to the emotional connotations of nationalism and nationalistic attitudes hold emotional dimensions by definition. It follows that the emotional dimensions of attitudes held by Slavic Canadians may differ from the emotional dimensions of attitudes held by Italian Canadians.

A similar prediction emerges from a Whorfian notion which

holds that the cognitive part of attitudes differs among speakers of differing languages. The Whorfian position argues that one's cognitive structure reflects the patterns of one's language and since different languages possess different patterns, the speakers of those languages should encode information in different ways (Fishman, 1966). As attitudes possess cognitive characteristics by definition, the cognitive parts of attitudes should differ between language groups.

The foregoing three part rationale for attitude differences between language groups has not indicated the nature or direction of the social attitudes of Slavic and Italian Canadians and one must turn to research on these groups to make specific predictions. This research suggests that Italian Canadians hold attitudes of greater hostility and anxiety towards authority than Slavic Canadians. This hostile and anxious reaction to authority may be inferred from this passage from the Italians of Montreal:

> As so many Italian Canadians have been able to better their economic conditions so strikingly in one generation, many have adopted very conservative attitudes towards the increasing role which the government is playing in welfare services, education, and public health. The middle-class sons of penniless peasant immigrants who in the twenties and thirties depended upon charity of the church and friends if they became ill, criticize the Quebec government's increasing involvement in medical aid. (Boissevain, 1971, p. 18)

Professor Boissevain also notes that no one leader of the Italian community in Montreal exists. One might speculate that this negative reaction to authority may have roots in the distrust and suspicion focused on the Italian community during the second World War.

The Slavic Canadians, on the other hand, have demonstrated a rapid assimulation into the English Canadian culture as demonstrated

by intermarriage rates and school attendance (Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, IV, 1969). This assimulation suggests that Slavic Canadians have accepted the dominant English Canadian culture and probably share its low hostility towards authority reactions (Ryan, 1971).

These factors lend support to the following predictions; (1) Italian Canadians will hold attitudes of greater hostility towards authority than Slavic Canadians and (2) Italian Canadians will hold attitudes of greater anxiety towards authority than Slavic Canadians.

METHODOLOGY

The first section of this paper reviewed the literature in order to predict that Italian Canadians would hold attitudes of greater hostility and anxiety towards authority than Slavic Canadians. This section of the report describes the subjects, procedures, and analytical strategies which tested the two hypotheses.

Respondents

Respondents were 58 summer session students enrolled in the humanities, social sciences, and education at the Universite de Quebec, McGill University, and Loyola of Montreal. Most respondents were engaged in full time occupations and, thus, were only part-time students.

Each respondent categorized himself according to his linguistic orientation and 29 respondents claimed Italian as their first language and 29 respondents claimed a Slavic language (Polish, Russian, Czech, or Slovak) as their first language.

Research Instrument

Each respondent completed a 24 item Likert type scale designed to measure three affective dimensions of attitudes towards authority; attitudes of hostility, attitudes of acceptance, and attitudes of anxiety. The scale emerged in a two step process described in prior reports (Ryan, 1971, 1972 a, 1972 b).

Procedure

Data Collection. The researcher, with the help of the class

professor distributed the research instrument prior to the class lecture and vocally summarized the letter of introduction which preceded the attitude scale.

Coding. The responses to the five response option Likert type scale were scored from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) for each item and each respondent. The results were treated cumulatively for each attitude dimension and each respondent yielding a possible range of 7 to 35 on each dimension of the scale. Three items served as buffer items.

Analysis

The resultant dependent scores were analyzed by means of three directional t tests. The first t test compared the attitudes of hostility towards authority of the two language groups; the second t test compared the attitudes of anxiety; and the third t test compared the attitudes of acceptance of authority. The 0.05 level of significance was used in all interpretations of the results.

TABLE 1

t TEST OF ITALIAN AND SLAVIC CANADIAN ATTITUDES OF HOSTILITY TOWARDS AUTHORITY

GROUPS	$\bar{X}_i$	$s_{\bar{x}}$	$\bar{X}_s$	$s_{\bar{x}}$	t	P
ITALIAN/SLAVIC	20, 9310	0.9402	23.3448	0.7040	2.0549	0.025*

*P 0.05

TABLE 2

t TEST OF ITALIAN AND SLAVIC CANADIAN ATTITUDES OF ANXIETY TOWARDS AUTHORITY

GROUPS	$\bar{X}_i$	$s_{\bar{x}}$	$\bar{X}_s$	$s_{\bar{x}}$	t	P
ITALIAN/SLAVIC	20.5172	0.8179	23.1379	0.9835	2.0488	0.025*

*P 0.05

TABLE 3

t TEST OF ITALIAN AND SLAVIC CANADIAN ATTITUDES OF ACCEPTANCE TOWARDS AUTHORITY

GROUPS	$\bar{X}_i$	$s_{\bar{x}}$	$\bar{X}_s$	$s_{\bar{x}}$	t	P
ITALIAN/SLAVIC	15.5862	0.5625	16.7586	0.6131	1.4089	0.100*

RESULTS

The analysis of the data reveals that Italian Canadians do hold attitudes of greater hostility towards authority than do Slavic Canadians ($t = 2.0549$, $df = 28$, $p < 0.025$). The analysis

insert Table 1 about here

of the data also reveals that Italian Canadians hold attitudes of greater anxiety towards authority than Slavic Canadians ($t=2.0488$, $df = 28$, $p < 0.025$). The two language groups do not differ significantly

insert Table 2 about here

on attitudes of acceptance of authority ($t = 1.4089$, $df = 28$, $p < 0.1000$).

insert Table 3 about here

DISCUSSION

The results of this study support the study's two research hypotheses. The first hypothesis predicted that Italian Canadians would hold attitudes of greater hostility towards authority than Slavic Canadians and the second hypothesis predicted that Italian Canadians would hold attitudes of greater anxiety towards authority than Slavic Canadians. It would seem that the conservative attitudes of Italian Montrealers towards authority mentioned in Boissevain's (1971) study have generalized to this research project. The high anxiety level of Italian Canadians may relate to their minority language status in a French speaking province and an English speaking country.

A comparison of the findings of this study to the attitudinal positions of French and English Canadians on the same scale (Ryan, 1972 a) should offer some insights. This comparison reveals that Italian Canadians share a high level of hostility towards authority with the French Canadian majority in Quebec province while the Slavic Canadians share the low level of hostility towards authority of English Canadians, the majority Canadian language group. One might conjecture that a shared Roman Catholic religious affiliation might serve as a cause of attitudinal similarity between Italian and French Canadians while the shared English language education serves as the cause of the attitudinal similarity between the Slavic and English Canadians. Future research may test these conjectures.

Of note also is the fact that Italian Canadians share high scores on attitudes of anxiety towards authority with English Canadians. This shared anxiety may spring from the minority language status of both language groups within French speaking Quebec province and may reflect reactions of the recent upsurge of French Canadian nationalism.

This study has merely begun the descriptive process antecedent to any intergroup experimental analysis. Future projects might determine the relative influence of language, social class, religion, sex, and age on social attitudes of majority and minority linguistic groups. Multiple regression analytical techniques might offer a mode of answering such questions. The review of the literature in this report reflects the scarcity of such research and the related need.

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